



The Contemporary Quranist Movement in Bangladesh and Its Principal Arguments: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

This study investigates the contemporary Quranist movement in Bangladesh, examining its intellectual foundations, principal arguments, and core objections to the authority of the Prophetic Sunnah. It offers a systematic analytical and critical evaluation of these claims within the normative framework of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the methodological principles of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. The significance of this research arises from the growing tendency within certain intellectual and media circles in Bangladeshi society to advocate exclusive adherence to the Qur'an while rejecting or marginalizing the binding authority of the Sunnah. Such tendencies carry far-reaching intellectual, theological, and social implications, particularly with respect to Islamic identity and the unity of religious authority among Muslims. Methodologically, the study adopts an inductive and foundational approach to examine the writings and public statements of prominent Quranist figures. This is followed by an analytical and critical framework that classifies and evaluates their arguments, identifies internal inconsistencies, and responds through both textual evidence and rational analysis. The research further incorporates a contextual case study exploring the dissemination of Quranist thought in Bangladesh and its impact on youth and university students. The study concludes that exclusive reliance on the Qur'an coupled with the denial of the Sunnah's authority does not represent a methodologically sound or academically sustainable position. Rather, it reflects fundamental misunderstandings concerning the nature of revelation and its interpretive framework. The findings affirm that an accurate comprehension of the Qur'an and the coherent implementation of Islamic law are inseparable from the explanatory and practical role of the Prophetic Sunnah. Finally, the study underscores the potential implications of this trend for religious cohesion and social stability, and it proposes scholarly and educational recommendations to strengthen sound Islamic understanding and address contemporary intellectual challenges in Bangladesh.

Keywords: *Qur'an, Quranist movement, Hadith, Sunnah*

1 Introduction

All praise is due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah. By His grace, Allah has made us among the Muslims and chosen Islam as our religion. For the preservation and guidance of this religion, He has established two primary and foundational sources: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His

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Messenger. Adherence to the Sunnah is presented in the Qur'an as an essential condition of true faith: "Say, if you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful."¹ Likewise, the Qur'an warns against opposing the Prophet ﷺ: "So let those who oppose his command beware lest a trial befall them or a painful punishment afflict them."²

Within the Sunni scholarly tradition, the most reliable understanding of Islam is that transmitted by the righteous predecessors (Al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ) and developed by the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah over the past fourteen centuries. In this framework, the Qur'an and the Sunnah are inseparable: the Sunnah functions as the authoritative exposition, clarification, and practical embodiment of the Qur'anic revelation. Accordingly, an adequate understanding of the Qur'an cannot be attained in isolation from the Prophetic Sunnah. In recent decades, however, a movement identifying itself as "Ahl Al-Qur'an," more commonly referred to in the Bangladeshi context as "Quranists," has gained visibility. The term "Quranists" is employed in this study because it is the most prevalent designation in public discourse and contemporary writings in Bangladesh, notwithstanding the diversity of views among those associated with the label regarding the scope and status of the Sunnah. Proponents of this trend claim exclusive adherence to the Qur'an and maintain that it alone constitutes the sole authoritative source of Islam. They argue that the Sunnah is neither reliably established nor free from contradiction with the Qur'an and therefore cannot serve as a binding source of religious authority. In practice, this position subjects revelation to the judgment of unaided reason. A central methodological concern in their approach is the adoption of an individualistic and selective reading of the Qur'an, detached from the interpretive legacy of the early generations of Muslims. Such an approach has not yielded a coherent or methodologically sustainable scholarly framework and reveals notable tensions and inconsistencies within its epistemological foundations. Furthermore, this trend extends beyond a merely intellectual divergence; it carries broader implications that affect the integrity of Islamic religious and cultural tradition. The core problem addressed in this study lies in the absence of a precise methodological definition of the term "Quranists," as well as the frequent conflation between the categorical rejection of the Sunnah and legitimate forms of ḥadīth criticism or juristic disagreement recognized within the Islamic scholarly tradition. This conflation has generated conceptual ambiguity concerning nature, boundaries, and historical development of the movement. The significance of this research, therefore, stems from the need to examine this phenomenon within a rigorous academic and methodological framework, particularly in light of its theological and intellectual implications in contemporary Bangladesh. The study seeks to clarify the nature of this movement, trace its historical roots, analyze its methodological premises and principal arguments, and distinguish between wholesale denial of the Sunnah and established modes of scholarly critique within the Islamic intellectual heritage. To this end, it employs a historical method to investigate the movement's origins and evolution, alongside an analytical-critical approach to examine its central claims and underlying assumptions. The discussion begins with an exploration of its historical emergence before proceeding to a systematic analysis of its methodological foundations and major arguments.

2. Research Problem

At the outset of this research, the investigator encountered a number of significant challenges, foremost among them the increasing dissemination of Quranist ideas within Bangladeshi society and the serious intellectual and theological consequences attributed to their spread. The Grand Mufti of Bangladesh, Shaykh Mawlānā 'Abd al-Mālik, has addressed this phenomenon in one of his articles, observing that the influence of these ideas has contributed to religious, doctrinal, cultural, and civilizational disorientation. Among the manifestations of such disruption, he identifies a gradual erosion of trust in the Prophet, the Companions, and the Successors.³

¹ The Qur'an, Surah Aal 'Imran 3:31

² Al-Nūr 24:63

³ Mufti Abdul Malik, নব্য আহলে কুরআনের মূল অপরাধ রাসূল অবমাননা "The Primary Crime of the Neo-Qur'anists Is Insulting the Prophet ﷺ" (article published),

Similarly, Shaykh al-Muḥaddith Mufti ‘Abdullāh Ḥasan Al-Qāsimī, affiliated with the organization known as the “Qur’anic Center,” argues in his writings that this movement does not merely generate division, but implicitly seeks to undermine religion and Islamic culture.⁴ In his assessment, several of its claims and doctrinal positions conflict with sound reason and the natural disposition (fiṭrah). These circumstances required the researcher to proceed with caution, mindful of the risk of misinterpretation or inadvertent influence by the arguments advanced or transmitted by proponents of the movement. Nevertheless, the imperatives of scholarly inquiry demanded perseverance and methodological rigor. A recurring feature of Quranist literature is the selective citation, omission, interpolation, and reinterpretation of ḥadīth reports in ways that call into question the integrity of the Prophetic tradition and the authority of established scholars. Such strategies may lead readers into a state of sustained skepticism, gradually weakening their confidence in the Sunnah and rendering them more susceptible to subjective interpretation. Consequently, engaging critically with their writings necessitates sustained reflection, repeated examination, and careful analytical scrutiny in order to uncover their methodological premises and underlying assumptions. An additional difficulty arises from the scarcity of comprehensive primary sources on the Quranist movement in the Bengali language. To the best of our knowledge, existing discussions are largely fragmentary and limited to brief, general treatments rather than systematic academic studies. The limited availability of Quranist publications in Bengali further complicates the task, requiring extensive efforts in translation, synthesis, and critical evaluation. Moreover, this research necessitates sustained engagement with classical Islamic sources across multiple disciplines—including Qur’anic exegesis, ḥadīth studies, legal theory (uṣūl al-fiqh), and theology—in order to assess and respond adequately to Quranist critiques. These foundational works often employ precise terminology and highly nuanced argumentation, obliging the researcher to navigate carefully between diverse intellectual traditions to analyze their positions and identify their principal claims. Mastery of these sources is indispensable for producing a study that is accurate, rigorous, and comprehensive.

Another dimension of the problem concerns the susceptibility of certain segments of Bangladeshi Muslim youth to Quranist ideas, frequently due to limited familiarity with the movement’s underlying premises and objectives. This has contributed, in some cases, to confusion between established doctrine and contested interpretations, generating spiritual unease and intellectual uncertainty. Furthermore, the dissemination of partial or total rejection of the Sunnah has reportedly been facilitated in certain circles by influential individuals—including members of the military and senior officials—who advocate an individualized and independent engagement with the Qur’an detached from the Prophetic tradition. Such support has contributed to the spread and relative resilience of the Quranist movement in Bangladesh. The implications of this movement extend beyond abstract theoretical debate; they directly affect the lived religious experience of Muslims—their faith, practice, and communal cohesion. By weakening adherence to the Prophetic Sunnah, regarded within Sunni orthodoxy as the second foundational source of Islamic legislation, the movement contributes to doctrinal instability, deviation from established methodological frameworks, and fragmentation within the Muslim community. For this reason, the study of the Contemporary Quranist Movement in Bangladesh is not merely an academic exercise, but an intellectual and social necessity. It aims to contribute to the preservation of coherent Islamic thought in Bangladesh and to safeguard the religious identity of its Muslim community—and, more broadly, that of the wider Ummah—from distortion and deviation.

3. Research Methodology

This study is situated within the field of qualitative analytical research and is primarily based on the examination

(Dhaka: Markaz al-Da’wah al-Islamiyyah – Al-Kawthar Monthly Magazine, issue 10, Rabi’ al-Awwal 1442 AH / November 2020). With adaptation, see: <https://www.alkawsar.com/bn/article/2719>

⁴ See: Mufti Abdullah Hasan al-Qasimi, কথিত আহলে কুরআন দাবি খন্ডন ও আপত্তি নিরসন *Refutation of the Claims of the So-Called Ahl al-Qur’an and Responses to Their Objections* (Bangladesh: Dhaka, Nabadhara, 1st ed., 2024), p. 17.

and critical analysis of published texts and documents related to the contemporary Quranist movement in Bangladesh. It does not rely on field interviews or survey instruments; rather, it focuses on the written, recorded, and digital intellectual output of this trend and evaluates its doctrinal, methodological, and legal arguments within the framework of established Islamic scholarship.

The research adopts a descriptive-analytical approach as its overarching framework in order to describe the emergence of Quranist thought in the Bangladeshi context, trace its development, and analyze its central concepts and arguments. In addition, a historical perspective is employed to explore the intellectual roots of this movement and its contemporary manifestations within Bangladeshi society. This combined approach allows for a clearer understanding of its formation, spread, and influence.

The study further utilizes a foundational inductive method by systematically collecting and examining statements and arguments presented by contemporary Quranist writers and speakers in books, articles, lectures, and digital platforms. These materials are carefully documented, categorized, and analyzed according to thematic and methodological criteria. The aim of this process is to identify the principal claims raised concerning the authority of the Prophetic Sunnah and the sources of Islamic legislation and to examine them within a structured academic framework.

An analytical-critical method is also employed to evaluate these arguments by examining their internal coherence, epistemological assumptions, and methods of interpretation. Through comparison with the Qur'an, the authentic Sunnah, and recognized principles of Islamic legal theory and exegesis, the study seeks to highlight methodological inconsistencies and assess the broader doctrinal and social implications of this discourse. Particular attention is given to its impact on patterns of religious learning, perceptions of scholarly authority, and religious cohesion among Muslim youth in Bangladesh.

Through this integrated methodology, the study aims to provide a balanced academic treatment that combines description, analysis, and critical evaluation. It seeks to contribute to a clearer understanding of contemporary Quranist thought in Bangladesh and its implications for religious interpretation, authority, and social stability.

4 The Quranists: The Definition of the Qur'an in Linguistic Usage

The term *Qur'an* is derived from the Arabic root (q-r-'), which in its primary linguistic usage conveys the meanings of reading, recitation, collection, and gathering. From this root are formed several cognate expressions, including *qirā'ah* (reading), *qāri'* (reader), and *Qur'ān*. In certain phonetic contexts, the hamzah may be eased in pronunciation. The designation *Qur'an* is thus intimately connected to the semantic notion of compilation and integration, as it brings together verses and chapters and encompasses a wide range of themes, including narratives, legal injunctions, promises, and warnings. Technically, the term refers to the Book revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ as guidance for humanity. It is the divinely revealed text whose verses are recited and whose chapters are compiled into a coherent and unified structure. The Qur'an itself characterizes this revelation in the verse: "Indeed, we have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an so that you may understand" (Yūsuf 12:2).⁵

4.1 The Quranists in Terminological Usage

In terminological usage, *Quranists* refers to a group that maintains that obedience to God is fulfilled exclusively through adherence to the Qur'an.⁶ The designation "Quranists," in itself, carries an ostensibly honorable religious connotation, insofar as it is directly associated with the Qur'an. Although the term was initially employed by critics of the movement and was later adopted by its adherents, those who identify with it regard this attribution as a mark of distinction and legitimacy. Consequently, they openly and consciously describe themselves as "Quranists." It is therefore essential to approach this designation with analytical caution. Despite

⁵ Majd al-Din Abu al-Sa'adat al-Mubarak al-Shaybani al-Jazari Ibn al-'Athir, *Al-Nihaya fi Gharib al-Hadith wa al-Athar*, edited by Taher al-Zawi and Mahmoud al-Tanahi, (Beirut: Al-Maktaba al-'Ilmiyya, 1399 AH / 1979 CE), Vol. 4, p. 30."

⁶ See: Abu al-Ashbal Hasan al-Zuhairi al-Mansuri al-Misri, *Sharh Usul I'tiqad Ahl al-Sunnah* by al-Lalika'i (source of the book: audio lessons transcribed by the Islamweb website), vol. 5, p. 2.

the apparent nobility implied by the name, the movement's defining doctrinal position is characterized by its rejection of ḥadīth literature and the Prophetic Sunnah as binding and authoritative sources of religion. In this respect, the term's positive linguistic association does not necessarily reflect the substantive methodological and theological implications of the movement's central claims.⁷

4.2 The Argument of the “Delayed Compilation of the Sunnah” and the Challenge to Its Authority: Presentation of the Argument

Sajjal Roshān raises the issue of the delayed compilation of the Prophetic Sunnah as a means to question the binding authority (ḥujjiyyah) of ḥadīth. He contends that what is presently recognized as the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ consists primarily of reports attributed to him after his death, and he challenges the religious obligation to adhere to such accounts. According to Roshān, the collection and documentation of ḥadīth did not occur during the Prophet's lifetime but were undertaken only long after his passing. He asserts: "There can be no mention of these ḥadīth collections in the Qur'an, because Imām al-Bukhārī—often regarded as the first to compile authentic ḥadīth—was born nearly three hundred years after the Prophet's death in present-day Uzbekistan. The first individual to systematically gather and record ḥadīth was Imām Mālik of Madinah, who collected narrations directly from a number of Companions. Many scholars in Makkah and Madinah consider al-Muwatta' of Imām Mālik among the most authentic ḥadīth compilations."⁸ Building on this historical framing, Roshān proceeds to question the legal and binding authority of these narrations, arguing: "Among the Prophet's responsibilities was to teach people religious rulings and proper conduct, all of which are contained within the Qur'an. If additional sources were necessary, the Prophet ﷺ would have personally ensured their documentation or commanded that they be recorded."⁹ He reinforces this argument through a comparison between the meticulous preservation of the Qur'an and the absence of a contemporaneously codified record of the Sunnah, placing responsibility directly upon the Prophet ﷺ: "The duty to document wisdom (ḥikmah) was not that of Imām al-Bukhārī, but of the Prophet ﷺ himself. It may be argued that the Prophet transmitted wisdom to his Companions, yet if this were sufficient, we would expect explicit references to such guidance in the Qur'an. Was the Prophet ﷺ sent exclusively to his Companions, or to all humanity until the Day of Judgment? If the latter, why did he not compile a book of wisdom for future generations in the same manner as the Qur'an? The Qur'an was revealed over twenty-three years, and no verse has been added or removed. Why, then, was no parallel compilation of wisdom undertaken, despite this being attributed to the Prophet ﷺ? Why did he leave this task open to others? A task assigned to everyone is often completed by no one. The Qur'an had one angel and one Messenger. A Prophet is one who foresees, and prophecy entails foretelling the future. Did the Prophet ﷺ not foresee the potential for deception and corruption in the transmission of ḥadīth that could devastate communities? What legitimate obstacles prevented him from compiling wisdom or ḥadīth under his supervision—poverty, insufficient manpower, scarcity of writing materials, or lack of printing technology? Did the industrial revolution occur in the time of al-Bukhārī and al-Tirmidhī? Were jet engines, supercomputers, offset printing, or 3D printing available to facilitate the recording of five million ḥadīth?"¹⁰

Roshān further extends this argument to the period following the Prophet's death, citing the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs as additional evidence of delayed documentation: "After the Prophet's passing, the most appropriate and trustworthy period for compiling ḥadīth was the era of the four caliphs: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with them). These four played a pivotal role in the expansion and consolidation of Islam. They embraced Islam in its earliest stages and remained in close proximity to the Prophet until his death. Abū Bakr and 'Umar were the Prophet's fathers-in-law, and 'Uthmān and 'Alī were his sons-in-law. Despite their significant contributions to the growth and stabilization of the Muslim community—and the prosperity of the state treasury during 'Uthmān's caliphate—none initiated a formal effort to collect,

⁷ See: Dr. Ahmad bin Marji Salih al-Falih and Dr. Khalid bin Nawaf al-Shuha, *Contemporary Efforts in Refuting the Qur'anists: Presentation and Critique* (Journal of Al-Baha University for Humanities, issue 14, Rajab 1439 AH / March 2018), pp. 108–109.

⁸ See: Sajjal Roshan, *রিলেজিয়াস মাইন্ডসেট বিশ্বাসের ঢেঁকি গেলা* (al-'Aqliyyah al-Diniyyah wa Ibtela' al-Mu'taqad Ibtela'an A'ma) (Dhaka: Markaz al-Buhuth al-Diniyyah, 2nd ed., 2021), p. 88.

⁹ See: Sajjal Roshan, *ibid.*, p. 89.

¹⁰ See: Sajjal Roshan, *ibid.*, p. 122.

record, or preserve ḥadīth. Furthermore, the intentions of Imām al-Bukhārī and other later compilers in documenting ḥadīth cannot be definitively determined." This presentation reflects Roshān's central claim that the temporal gap between the Prophet's lifetime and the systematic compilation of ḥadīth undermines the perceived binding authority of the Prophetic Sunnah.¹¹

4.3 Preliminary Analysis of the Argument

At its core, this objection arises from a conflation of three distinct stages in the historical development of the Sunnah: writing (kitābah), compilation (tadwīn), and systematic classification (taṣnīf). Such conflation is a recurrent feature of contemporary Quranist discourse. Linguistically, kitābah refers to the act of recording or inscribing, whereas tadwīn denotes the organized gathering of dispersed written materials into a single, structured collection. Classical lexicographers define a dīwān as a collection of documents¹² and explain that dawwanahu— "he compiled it"—signifies that the materials were gathered.¹³ A careful historical examination demonstrates that writing of the Sunnah existed during the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime and continued among the Companions. Many Companions recorded what they heard from the Prophet ﷺ in personal scrolls (ṣuḥuf), although these individual writings were not yet assembled into a single codified volume. In the late first Islamic century, particularly during the caliphate of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, official initiatives were undertaken to gather these dispersed materials into unified collections. This stage is what classical scholars refer to as the formal tadwīn of ḥadīth, often associated with figures such as Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī.¹⁴ The subsequent stage of systematic classification (taṣnīf) emerged in the first half of the second Islamic century. This phase involved arranging ḥadīths either thematically—according to legal chapters—or by chains of transmission (musnad format). Importantly, this stage did not mark the beginning of the preservation of the Sunnah, but rather its rigorous organization according to scholarly methodology.¹⁵ Historical evidence demonstrates that the Companions actively wrote, transmitted, reviewed, and verified the Sunnah long before any formal, state-supported compilation. This evidence undermines the Quranist claim that the Sunnah was neglected or unjustifiably delayed. Instead, the argument of "delayed compilation" reflects a selective and fragmented reading of history rather than a careful, comprehensive examination of the sources. It becomes evident that the assertion of delayed compilation is grounded in a methodological misunderstanding of the historical development and preservation of the Sunnah. Such claims do not constitute valid grounds for rejecting its authority; rather, they serve as a pretext for challenging the entire ḥadīth methodology.

4.4 The Suspicion of Sufficiency in the Qur'an Alone

Sājel Roshān contends that adherence to the Qur'an alone is sufficient for religious life. He asserts: "God revealed the Qur'an with a special divine guarantee of preservation in response to humanity's need for guidance. There is no verse indicating otherwise. On the contrary, the Qur'an presents itself as a complete, comprehensive, pure, uncorrupted, unaltered, and fully reliable constitution. God states in Sūrat al-Baqarah: 'Do not mix the truth with falsehood,'¹⁶ emphasizing that the legislative truth contained in the Qur'an must not be combined with anything fabricated, distorted, or superficially similar. In Sūrat al-Mā'idah, God says: 'Today I have perfected for you your religion, completed My favor upon you, and approved for you Islam as your religion.'¹⁷ This demonstrates that the Qur'an provides a complete and sufficient framework for life. Although God commanded

¹¹ See: Sajjal Roshan, *ibid.*, p. 90.

¹² See: Muhammad ibn Mukarram ibn 'Ali, Abu al-Fadl, Jamal al-Din Ibn Manzur al-Ansari al-Ruwayfi'i al-Ifriqi, *Lisan al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 3rd ed., 1414 AH), vol. 13, p. 166.

¹³ See: Muhammad Murtada al-Husayni al-Zabidi, *Taj al-'Arus min Jawahir al-Qamus*, ed. by a group of specialists (Kuwait: Ministry of Guidance and Information – National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, published between 1385–1422 AH / 1965–2001), vol. 35, p. 35.

¹⁴ See: Abu al-Qasim 'Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Hibat Allah ibn 'Abd Allah al-Shafi'i, known as Ibn 'Asakir, *Tarikh Madinat Dimashq wa Dhikr Fadliha wa Tasmiyat Man Hallaha min al-Amathil aw Ijtaza binawahaha min Waridiha wa Ahliha*, study and editing by Muhibb al-Din Abu Sa'id 'Umar ibn Gharamah al-'Amrawi (Dar al-Fikr for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 1415 AH / 1995), vol. 55, p. 334.

¹⁵ See: 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Bakr Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Tadrib al-Rawi fi Sharh Taqrib al-Nawawi*, ed. by Abu Qutaybah Nazar Muhammad al-Faryabi (Dar Taybah, n.d.), vol. 9, p. 93.

¹⁶ The Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:42

¹⁷ The Qur'an, Surah Al-Ma'idah 5:3

belief in all revealed scriptures, He did not permit any humanly preserved or compiled book to serve as a source of religious legislation. These verses clearly establish the Qur'an as lucid in meaning, comprehensive, pure, and fully applicable."¹⁸ According to Roshān, there is neither rational nor religious necessity to refer to the Prophetic Sunnah or ḥadīth in order to understand or implement the Qur'an. He further explains: "One may enact a million laws, yet none may exceed the limits of the constitution. The constitution determines how legislators are elected, how the prime minister, cabinet, and head of state are selected, and how laws are enacted. A law is constitutional only if it conforms to these procedures. Yet in many developing countries, the constitution is reduced to paper while laws are enacted based on power dynamics; such laws may appear constitutional outwardly, but in reality, they are not derived from it. Similarly, in our religious practice, not all customs and traditions originate in the Qur'an. Many are only superficially linked and then imposed upon people. One may devise countless systems and regulations, yet none may contradict the Qur'an. Whatever the Qur'an does not declare unlawful cannot be deemed unlawful, and whatever it does not declare obligatory cannot be considered obligatory."¹⁹ He further asserts that matters outside the Qur'an cannot constitute divine legislation; at most, they may be treated as personal preference or social custom, lacking binding religious authority. To regard such matters as obligatory, he argues, constitutes sin. Roshān illustrates this with the metaphor of cultivation: "Religious practice is often overrun with weeds rather than pure guidance. We nurture these weeds throughout life, hoping to reap their benefits in the hereafter. Yet a farmer knows that the sooner weeds are identified and uprooted, the better, for they consume water and fertilizer without producing fruit. Similarly, the decisive instrument for removing religious weeds is the Qur'an. We need not trace their origins; whatever is not found in the Qur'an is not part of the religion."²⁰ There is no harm in adopting matters outside the Qur'an as personal choices, tastes, or fashions. However, elevating them to binding religious rulings constitutes sin. Likewise, if eating pork is not driven by desire or intended as defiance of God's command, it incurs no sin. Nothing outside God's explicit rulings may be regarded as legitimate religious legislation."²¹

This argument encapsulates Roshān's central position that the Qur'an alone provides the definitive and sufficient guide for religious understanding and practice, while all external sources, including the Sunnah and ḥadīth, are non-binding and subject to personal or social discretion.

4.5 Preliminary Analysis of the Suspicion

This position is predicated on the assumption that the Qur'anic text alone is sufficient to provide complete guidance on all aspects of Sharī'ah and its rulings, while denying any independent explanatory or interpretive role to the Prophetic Sunnah. Such an approach reflects a fragmented reading of the Qur'an, detaching revelation from its practical embodiment and treating the Sunnah as a nonessential addition to the religion. It further embodies a narrow conception of legislation, restricting religious authority to the written text and overlooking the critical role of the Prophet ﷺ in interpreting, exemplifying, and applying divine guidance to lived reality. This issue requires further detailed analysis within the broader framework of Qur'anic interpretation and Prophetic authority. It is evident from the foregoing that the claim of the Qur'an's sufficiency alone is not merely a partial rejection of the Sunnah; rather, it rests on a methodological framework that excludes the Prophet's ﷺ explanatory and practical role, reducing Islamic legislation solely to the Qur'anic text. This position constitutes a central intellectual tenet of the contemporary Qur'anist movement and, as such, warrants a thorough scholarly critique.

4.6 Denial of the Prophet ﷺ as the Clarifier and Interpreter of the Qur'an, and Rejection of the Sunnah as a Source of Religion

Abu Sa'īd Khān contends that the Qur'an does not attribute to the Prophet ﷺ the role of clarifier or interpreter of revelation, asserting instead that God alone undertakes the explanation of His Book. From this perspective, he

¹⁸ See: Sajjal Roshan, *রিলেজিয়াস মাইন্ডসেট বিশ্বাসের টেকি গেলা* (al-'Aqliyyah al-Diniyyah wa Ibtela' al-Mu'taqad Ibtela'an A'ma) (Dhaka: Markaz al-Buhuth al-Diniyyah, 2nd ed., 2021), p. 99.

¹⁹ See: Sajjal Roshan, *ibid.*, p. 100.

²⁰ See: Sajjal Roshan, *ibid.*, p. 230.

²¹ See: Sajjal Roshan, *ibid.*, p. 238.

denies any independent explanatory or interpretive function for the Prophet ﷺ in understanding the Qur'an and consequently rejects the Sunnah as a source of binding religious legislation. He further argues that the widely held Muslim belief that the Prophet ﷺ interprets divine revelation lacks explicit Qur'anic support and arises primarily from traditional religious upbringing rather than textual evidence. He states: "God Himself explains His words, not the prophets. Many Muslims commonly assume that the Prophet is the interpreter of God's revealed speech and that no verse can be fully understood except through his explanation. However, the Qur'an provides no support for this claim. While the prophets did address believers regarding revealed verses, the Prophet ﷺ occasionally offered clarifications on his own initiative or in response to questions posed to him. Such explanations were general in nature, facilitating understanding, but they did not constitute a comprehensive interpretive authority. Often, the Prophet ﷺ remained silent or deferred his response because complete guidance had not yet been revealed. Given that the Qur'an was revealed gradually over an extended period, not all answers were immediately accessible to the believers. This divine blessing—the Word of God—was completed progressively, and God Himself declared its perfection. Therefore, a full understanding of any given matter requires collecting all relevant verses and engaging in holistic, multidimensional reading. With sincerity, diligent effort, and sufficient study, one may attain the necessary guidance, God willing. There is no inherent necessity to rely on the Prophet's narrations for interpreting the verses, since his statements are explicitly mentioned in only a limited number of passages. Had such reliance been essential, the Prophet ﷺ would have documented and authenticated it himself during his lifetime."²² This argument encapsulates Khān's central position that the Qur'an alone provides sufficient guidance for understanding divine revelation, while the Sunnah and the Prophet's explanations are not obligatory for deriving religious legislation.

4.7 Preliminary Analysis

This claim is grounded in two interrelated intellectual premises:

1. The denial that the Prophet ﷺ served as an authoritative explicator and clarifier of the Qur'an, limiting his role to the mere transmission of the text without independent explanatory or practical authority.
2. The rejection of the Sunnah as a binding source of legislation, thereby confining religion exclusively to the abstract Qur'anic text and regarding all other practices as non-binding human tradition.

This perspective reflects a particular conception of revelation and legislation that detaches the Qur'anic text from its lived implementation and treats the Sunnah as superfluous to religious understanding and practice. It also reveals a fragmented reading of the Qur'an, neglecting the practical and contextual framework in which the Prophet ﷺ conveyed and interpreted revelation.

4.8 Introductory Conclusion

This position effectively excludes the Prophet's ﷺ role in elucidating the Sharī'ah, reducing religion to an abstract textual framework. In practice, this approach strips legal rulings of their applied substance and severs the connection between revelation and its lived expression in Muslim life. It constitutes a foundational methodological principle of contemporary Qur'anist thought.

5 The Claim that Following the Sunnah and Hadith Constitutes Shirk in God's Sovereignty

Another claim advanced by proponents of Sunnah denial is that elevating the Sunnah and ḥadīth to the status of legislative sources constitutes shirk—associating partners with God—in divine sovereignty. They argue that legislative authority belongs solely to God, and that the Prophet ﷺ merely acted in accordance with Qur'anic revelation without possessing any independent legislative authority. Accordingly, they contend that treating the ḥadīth or Sunnah as binding sources of rulings constitutes attributing to them a share in divine legislation, which they regard as incompatible with pure monotheism. They state: "These hadiths are not mentioned in the Qur'an. What harm would there have been if God had included them in the Qur'an? The Qur'an repeats the same meanings ten or fifteen times. Had these hadiths appeared even in a single verse, divisions between Sunnis and

²² See: Abu Sa'īd Khan, প্রচলিত ইসলাম ও প্রকৃত ইসলাম (al-Islam al-Sha'i' wa al-Islam al-Haqiqi) (Dhaka: Bangla Bazar, Forum of Divine Revelation and Qur'anic Studies, 1st ed., 2022), p. 425.

Shi'is could have been avoided. When it is claimed that the Prophet commanded or forbade certain actions, and without documentation or divine authorization we begin imposing religious rulings—declaring what is lawful, unlawful, or obligatory—this opens the door for anyone to fabricate hadiths to legitimize their own path, sect, or extremist agenda—and this indeed occurs. If all volumes of hadith were collected, transporting them would require hundreds of trucks. One person may declare a hadith authentic and condemn anyone who rejects it as a disbeliever; another may declare it fabricated and label anyone who accepts it as ignorant. Narrations that align with the Qur'an may be regarded as general knowledge or historical information, but imposing obligations or prohibitions based on single hadith constitutes associating it with the Qur'an in legislative authority."²³ This argument reflects a central methodological concern among Qur'anist thinkers: the perceived threat to divine sovereignty posed by accepting the Sunnah as an authoritative source of legislation.

5.1 Preliminary Analysis

This position is based on a fundamental methodological confusion between affirming God's exclusive sovereignty in legislation and recognizing the divinely appointed means through which His rulings are communicated and understood. It constructs a false dichotomy between obedience to God and obedience to His Messenger ﷺ, treating the Sunnah as if it were an independent human legislation, disconnected from divine revelation. It is grounded in two interrelated premises:

1. The denial that the Sunnah constitutes divinely sanctioned revelation, limiting revelation exclusively to the recited Qur'anic text.
2. The assertion that obedience to the Prophet ﷺ beyond the Qur'an constitutes exceeding the bounds of monotheism, rendering adherence to his Sunnah a form of *shirk*.

This framework reflects a truncated understanding of divine sovereignty (*hākimiyyah*), detaching the divine command from the divinely designated means of its clarification and practical application. It effectively nullifies the Prophet's legislative authority and reduces revelation to a static text, subject to individual interpretation without authoritative methodological guidance.

5.2 Introductory Conclusion

It is evident that the claim that adherence to the Sunnah constitutes *shirk* arises directly from a fragmentary Qur'anist methodology, which separates revelation from its explanation and artificially frames obedience to God and obedience to His Messenger ﷺ as mutually exclusive. This argument represents the most extreme form of Sunnah denial, cloaking methodological deviation in the language of monotheism and transforming adherence to the Prophet ﷺ into a doctrinal accusation.

5.3 Applied Legislative Suspicions, The Claim that There Is No Reward in the Physical Forms and Movements of Prayer, and the Raising of Doubts Concerning the Qiblah

Sājel Roshan contends that the orientation toward the qiblah, as well as the outward movements and postures of prayer, carry neither spiritual reward nor devotional value. According to his view, the physical actions and ritual forms of prayer confer no inherent merit; rather, righteousness (*al-birr*) is confined to ethical and moral dimensions, such as faith, fulfillment of covenants, and other moral virtues. From this perspective, the direction one faces in prayer—east or west—does not constitute an act of rewarded righteousness. He states: "Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west."²⁴ God Himself has declared that righteousness does not consist in merely facing east or west; turning in a particular direction does not constitute righteousness. From America, one faces east in prayer; from Bangladesh, one faces west. Another interpretation situates this statement in the context of the qiblah's change from al-Masjid al-Aqṣā to the Ka'bah, clarifying that facing either location is not in itself an act of righteousness. In both instances, the statement pertains to prayer. While prayer is indeed a distinguished and profound act of worship in many respects, its physical movements, postures, and outward forms do not carry devotional reward. True righteousness, rather, lies in belief in God, the

²³ See: Sajjal Roshan, *রিলেজিয়াস মাইন্ডসেট বিশ্বাসের টেকি গেলা* (al-'Aqliyyah al-Diniyyah wa Ibtela'al-Mu'taqad Ibtela'an A'ma) (Dhaka:

Markaz al-Buhuth al-Diniyyah, 2nd ed., 2021), p. 126.

²⁴ The Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:177

Last Day, the angels, the revealed Books, and the prophets."²⁵ This argument reflects Roshan's broader methodological approach, which emphasizes ethical and cognitive dimensions of faith while minimizing the significance of ritual and physical expressions of worship.

5.4 Preliminary Analysis

This argument is based on isolating the verse from its context and ascribing to it a meaning it does not support. The Qur'an does not negate the value of facing the qiblah, nor does it deny reward for performing the prescribed forms of prayer. Rather, the verse addresses a specific corrective purpose: to refine the concept of righteousness among the People of the Book, who had reduced it to mere orientation toward a direction without genuine faith or righteous action. The Qur'an explicitly affirms the obligation of facing the qiblah in prayer, as in the command: "So turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Harām,"²⁶ an unequivocal devotional injunction that admits no reinterpretation. Furthermore, the very verse concerning righteousness immediately follows with a reference to prayer: "But righteousness is [in] one who believes in God ... and establishes prayer"²⁷ (Al-Baqarah 2:177). Establishing prayer can only be achieved through performing it according to its legislated manner and prescribed forms. The Qur'an also clarifies the wisdom behind the legislation of the qiblah and its connection to following the Messenger ﷺ: "We did not appoint the qiblah you were upon except to make evident who follows the Messenger."²⁸ (Al-Baqarah 2:143). This demonstrates that facing the qiblah is a divinely intended act of worship, not a mere formal gesture devoid of reward. The Prophetic Sunnah further affirms this meaning. The Prophet ﷺ emphasized the correct performance of prayer and invalidated improperly performed prayer, declaring: "Go back and pray, for you have not prayed."²⁹ He also established the general principle: "Pray as you have seen me praying."³⁰ These teachings confirm that the forms and actions of prayer are divinely ordained and that reward is contingent upon their proper execution. It is thus evident that the claim denying reward for the movements and forms of prayer, or diminishing the significance of facing the qiblah, stems from a truncated reading of the Qur'anic text. Such an approach effectively empties prayer of its practical devotional substance. This instance exemplifies how a fragmentary Qur'anist methodology undermines the practical rulings of Islam, necessitating a comprehensive examination of its foundations and implications.

5.5 The Claim that Alcohol Was Not Categorically Prohibited, Based on Considerations of Benefit and Gradual Legislation

Sājel Roshan contends that the Qur'an does not categorically prohibit alcohol but rather describes it as disliked or sinful without imposing an absolute interdiction. He likens alcohol consumption to what he terms a "deliberate sin," comparable to actions such as driving, arguing that the act itself is not inherently forbidden; transgression occurs only when a prescribed limit is exceeded. He explains: "Why was alcohol prohibited with such severity? In Sūrat al-Baqarah, God says: 'They ask you about wine and gambling. Say: In them there is great sin and [some] benefit for people, but their sin is greater than their benefit.'³¹ And in Sūrat al-Nisā': 'O you who believe, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying.'³³ These verses indicate that alcohol is something disliked by God, yet He does not declare it inherently impure, nor does He prescribe social expulsion or punishment for those who consume it. Furthermore, Sūrat al-Naḥl states: 'And from the fruits of date palms and grapes you derive intoxicants and good provision.'³⁴ From these Qur'anic presentations, it may be inferred that alcohol constitutes a deliberate sin, like driving: driving is permissible, but exceeding speed limits constitutes a violation. In this light, alcohol is discouraged, especially for children, due to

²⁵ See: Sajjal Roshan, *বিলেজিয়াস মাইন্ডসেট বিশ্বাসের টেকি গেলা* (al-'Aqliyyah al-Diniyyah wa Ibtela' al-Mu'taqad Ibtela'an A'ma) (Dhaka: Markaz al-Buhuth al-Diniyyah, 2nd ed., 2021), p. 28.

²⁶ The Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:144

²⁷ The Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:177

²⁸ The Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:143

²⁹ See: Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, ed. by a group of scholars (Beirut: Dar Ta'wq al-Najah, 1st ed., 1422 AH), hadith no. 757, vol. 1, p. 152.

³⁰ See: Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari, *ibid.*, hadith no. 6008, vol. 8, p. 9.

³¹ The Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:219

³³ The Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa 4:43

³⁴ The Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl 16:67

its harm outweighing its benefits. Historical examples, such as the American Eighteenth Amendment prohibiting alcohol from 1920 to 1933, demonstrate that total prohibition can produce negative outcomes. Consequently, it was repealed by the Twenty-First Amendment, accompanied by regulations emphasizing ‘responsible consumption.’” Roshan’s argument frames alcohol not as intrinsically forbidden but as a regulated act, the permissibility of which is conditional upon adherence to moral and social limits.³⁵

5.6 Preliminary Analysis

This argument is based on a selective reading of the Qur’anic text, fragmenting verses and detaching them from their legislative context, while overlooking the principle of gradualism in divine legislation.³⁶ Gradual legislation does not imply continuous permissibility; rather, it reflects a progressive process through which the legally responsible community is prepared to accept the final ruling once legislation is complete. Indeed, the author himself acknowledges this principle elsewhere in his work. The verses cited from Sūrat al-Baqarah and Sūrat al-Nisā’ represent preliminary stages in the legislative process regarding alcohol and do not constitute the final binding ruling. The conclusive prohibition is articulated in the Qur’an: “O you who believe, indeed wine, gambling, sacrificial stones, and divining arrows are but filth from the work of Satan, so avoid them that you may succeed.”³⁷ This verse establishes a definitive ruling, describing alcohol as *rijs* (impurity/abomination) and commanding total avoidance. The imperative “avoid” (*fajtanibūhu*) conveys a stronger prohibition than a mere admonition to refrain.³⁸

The verse in Sūrat al-Nahl, revealed in Makkah prior to the completion of legislation, contrasts intoxicants with “good provision” and implicitly censures the former; it does not imply permissibility. Similarly, the claim that describing alcohol as “sin” negates prohibition is fallacious, for the Qur’an explicitly states: “Say: My Lord has only forbidden... sin.”³⁹ Since alcohol is described as sin, it is unequivocally prohibited. Accordingly, the analogy between drinking alcohol and driving a car is invalid. Driving is inherently permissible, whereas alcohol is explicitly declared impure and characterized as the work of Satan; impurity cannot be rendered lawful in any quantity. It is evident, therefore, that the claim of alcohol’s permissibility or mitigation of its ruling stems from a truncated reading of Qur’anic legislation, one that neglects the principle of gradualism, omits the final abrogating ruling, and conflates descriptive references with binding legal judgment. This example illustrates the selective methodology that isolates texts from their legislative context and warrants a detailed examination of its foundations and implications.

5.7 The Claim of Non-Obligation to Adhere to Religious Rulings After Faith

Sajel Roshan contends that, once a person embraces Islam, there exists no binding religious obligation to adhere to the rulings of the Sharī’ah. He equates the status of a Muslim with that of a non-Muslim, asserting that just as a non-Muslim is free to accept or reject faith, so too, in his view, a Muslim may freely comply with or abandon religious obligations without restriction or accountability. Under this framework, acts of worship such as prayer and *zakāh*—and their neglect—are treated as purely personal matters, exempt from religious evaluation or sanction. He extends this reasoning to legal rulings and prescribed punishments (*ḥudūd*), including those related to theft, adultery, and retaliation (*qisās*), arguing that they are nullified once faith is professed. He states: “God says in Sūrat al-Kahf: ‘And say: The truth is from your Lord; so, whoever wills—let him believe; and whoever wills—let him disbelieve.’⁴⁰ God commanded His Prophet ﷺ to proclaim the truth and then leave people free to choose, whether to believe or disbelieve. Accordingly, whatever the Prophet ﷺ said or did was solely in accordance with God’s command, as further clarified in Sūrat al-Baqarah: ‘There is no compulsion in

³⁵ See: Sajjal Roshan, *রিলেজিয়াস মাইন্ডসেট বিশ্বাসের ঢেঁকি গেলা* (al-‘Aqliyyah al-Diniyyah wa Ibtela’ al-Mu‘taqad Ibtela’an A‘ma) (Dhaka: Markaz al-Buhuth al-Diniyyah, 2nd ed., 2021), p. 72.

³⁶ See: Muhammad Mustafa al-Zuhayli, *Al-Wajiz fi Usul al-Fiqh al-Islami* (Syria: Damascus, Dar al-Khayr for Printing, Publishing and Distribution; printed in Qatar: Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs – Department of Islamic Affairs, 2nd ed., 2006), vol. 2, p. 233.

³⁷ The Qur’an, Surah Al-Ma’idah 5:90

³⁸ See: Imad al-Din Abu al-Fida Isma‘il ibn ‘Umar ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi, *Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim*, commentary by Muhammad Husayn Shams al-Din (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1st ed., 1998), vol. 3, p. 161.

³⁹ The Qur’an, Surah Al-A‘raf 7:33

⁴⁰ The Qur’an, Surah Al-Kahf 18:29

religion.’⁴¹ There is no coercion in matters of religion, whether in accepting it or practicing it. This constitutes an official declaration by the Prophet ﷺ as God’s Messenger. In modern markets, sellers provide guarantees for quality goods, enabling buyers to purchase online without prior inspection. Similarly, Islam based solely on the Qur’an offers a lifelong guarantee, whereas religion based on ḥadīth provides no such assurance; for if someone accepts Islam and then changes his mind—even after a minute—he is punished with death.”⁴² This analogy is intended to negate the binding nature of Sharī‘ah legislation after faith and to undermine the authority of the Prophetic Sunnah.

5.8 Preliminary Analysis

This view reflects a fundamental conflation between two distinct matters: the freedom to accept Islam and the obligation to observe its legal rulings after embracing faith. Its proponents effectively negate the principle of legal accountability (*taklīf*), reducing faith to mere affiliation without binding commitment to God’s commands and prohibitions. In reality, legal responsibility is an inherent consequence of faith, not its contradiction. This perspective suspends the practical applicability of Sharī‘ah, strips it of its normative authority, and transforms religion into a set of optional moral guidelines with no bearing on individual conduct or social order. It exemplifies a fragmentary reading of the Qur’anic text that separates faith from action and isolates verses from their broader legislative context.

5.9 The Suspicion of Criticizing the Prophet’s ﷺ Polygamy

Abu Sa‘īd Khan contends that the ḥadīths detailing the Prophet’s ﷺ multiple marriages and certain aspects of his family life present him in a manner that, according to his interpretation, appears inconsistent with the dignity of prophethood and his exemplary moral character. He argues that these reports portray the Prophet ﷺ as excessively motivated by desire, and that his marriages to women of varying ages suggest worldly inclinations at odds with the prophetic ideal. Khan attributes these perceptions to a conflation of the Qur’anic text with purported ḥadīths, asserting that polygamy, as depicted in these reports, does not correspond with the elevated station of prophethood and, in his view, even contradicts the spirit of the Qur’an. He states: “Does the Qur’an describe the sexual capacity of the prophets or detail their relationships with multiple wives? The Qur’an does not teach obscenity nor endorse vulgarity. Turning to historical accounts, Anas ibn Mālik reported: The Prophet ﷺ would visit his wives in a single day and night, and they numbered eleven. I asked Anas: Did the Prophet possess such strength? He replied: We used to say that the Prophet was granted the strength of thirty men. Another narration similarly states that the Prophet was endowed with the strength of thirty men. What moral or intellectual framework allows one to speak in this manner—implying that the Prophet ﷺ engaged with all his wives day and night? Such narratives reflect ignorance and malintent toward the Prophet ﷺ. What instructive lesson—religious or ethical—can a Muslim or non-Muslim derive from such reports? God does not mention any of this in the Qur’an, nor is it established that the Prophet himself conveyed such statements as ḥadīth. What purpose do these crude accounts serve, other than to incite desire and propagate indecency? Those who fabricated such obscene claims about the Prophet’s marital life committed a reprehensible act deserving unequivocal condemnation.”⁴³ This claim illustrates how selective and distorted readings of ḥadīth can be misused to challenge the Prophet’s ﷺ moral and spiritual authority, necessitating careful contextualization and critical evaluation grounded in established Islamic scholarship.

5.10 Preliminary Analysis

This critique stems from a reductive understanding of prophethood that artificially separates the divine mission from the human reality in which the Prophet ﷺ lived, while ascribing moral implications to familial events that they do not inherently possess. It relies on a selective reading of ḥadīth and sīrah sources, neglecting their

⁴¹ The Qur’an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:256

⁴² See: Sajjal Roshan, *রিলেজিয়াস মাইন্ডসেট বিশ্বাসের ঢেঁকি গেলা* (al-‘Aqliyyah al-Diniyyah wa Ibtela‘ al-Mu‘taqad Ibtela‘an A‘ma) (Dhaka: Markaz al-Buhuth al-Diniyyah, 2nd ed., 2021), p. 154.

⁴³ See: Abu Sa‘īd Khan, *প্রচলিত ইসলাম ও প্রকৃত ইসলাম* (al-Islam al-Sha‘i‘ wa al-Islam al-Haqiqi) (Dhaka: Bangla Bazar, Forum of Divine Revelation and Qur’anic Studies, 1st ed., 2022), p. 238.

historical, social, and legislative contexts, and imposes contemporary cultural norms onto a fundamentally different historical milieu. The argument conflates polygamy—a divinely regulated institution, conditional upon justice—with sensationalized interpretations of the Prophet’s conduct unsupported by evidence. It also overlooks that polygamy was recognized in prior religious traditions and was not unique to the Prophet ﷺ. Furthermore, many of his marriages occurred during the later stages of his life, when he bore immense responsibilities of leadership and da‘wah, rather than during his youth or peak physical capacity. Numerous marriages served humanitarian, social, and legislative purposes, including caring for widows, strengthening communal bonds, consolidating the early Muslim community, implementing legal rulings in practice, and transmitting family-related guidance. Reducing these marriages to mere expressions of desire constitutes a fragmentary reading that strips the prophetic biography of its pedagogical and mission-oriented dimensions. It is therefore evident that the critique of the Prophet’s ﷺ polygamy rests upon the projection of modern moral assumptions onto the prophetic context, while disregarding the legislative objectives and higher purposes embedded within the sīrah. This perspective reflects a methodological flaw in understanding prophethood and results in a distorted portrayal of the Messenger ﷺ under the pretext of preserving Qur’anic purity.

6 Intellectual and Social Implications Derived from the Analysis of These Suspicions

Following the examination of the theological, methodological, and legislative claims advanced by contemporary Qur’anist thought in the Bangladeshi context, it becomes clear that these assertions extend beyond mere theoretical debate or intellectual disagreement. Their impact is profound, influencing the religious, cognitive, and social framework of Muslim communities. The danger inherent in these propositions lies not only in their individual content but also in the methodological distortions they introduce and the consequent transformations in religious understanding and practical observance. The most salient effects can be summarized as follows:

6.1 The Deconstruction of Religious Authority

Adopting a fragmentary reading of the Qur’anic text while rejecting the Prophetic Sunnah as an authoritative explanatory and legislative source fundamentally undermines the concept of religious authority in Islam. This approach removes interpretive and legislative legitimacy from the established scholarly tradition, leaving the Qur’anic text vulnerable to individual interpretation without methodological safeguards or recognized principles of exegesis. Such deconstructive tendencies are reinforced by skeptical inquiries regarding the binding nature of rulings derived from sources beyond the Qur’an, exemplified by questions such as: “To what extent are these juristic or ḥadīth-based rulings binding? What grants these texts legitimacy or authority?” Some even characterize established religious rituals as “based on foreign ḥadīths and jurisprudence unrelated to the Qur’an.”⁴⁴ This discourse clearly seeks to erode inherited legislative authority, portraying fiqh and ḥadīth as extraneous to the essence of religion. The resulting effect is a profound transformation in the structure of religiosity: revelation ceases to function as a governing authority and instead becomes raw material for projecting personal notions and justifying individual preferences. With the Sunnah, consensus (ijmā‘), and the methodological guidance of the early generations excluded, interpretations proliferate subjectively, and the standard distinguishing sound understanding from interpretive deviation is lost. Religion thus shifts from a binding, normative system to a fluid discourse continually reformulated according to individual intellectual inclinations. This tendency is reflected in statements such as: “The Qur’an is self-sufficient and provides all solutions,” “Returning to the Qur’an alone renders any external explanation unnecessary,” and “Excessive questioning and debate only increase confusion; tranquility is found in direct reading of the Qur’an.” Such assertions reveal a clear inclination to replace structured scholarly transmission with personal religious experience, thereby marginalizing the disciplined interpretive tradition that has historically safeguarded the integrity of Islamic jurisprudence and theology.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ See: Sajjal Roshan, *রিলেজিয়াস মাইন্ডসেট বিশ্বাসের টেকি গেলা* (al-‘Aqliyyah al-Diniyyah wa Ibtela’ al-Mu’taqad Ibtela’an A’ma) (Dhaka: Markaz al-Buhuth al-Diniyyah, 2nd ed., 2021), pp. 105-106.

⁴⁵ See: Akram Bhuiya Belsaeri, *Hadis Aswikār Kari Ahl-e Qur’an* (Munkiru al-Hadith al-Musammawn bi Ahl al-Qur’an) (Dhaka: Dar Ashraf al-Makhlūqat li al-Nashr, 1st ed., 2025), vol. 1, p. 191.

6.2 Weakening Confidence in the Sunnah and the Scholars

One of the most significant consequences of this trend is the erosion of trust in the Prophetic Sunnah and, by extension, in the scholars who have preserved, transmitted, and interpreted it over the centuries. When the Sunnah is framed as a later human construct or a non-binding historical endeavor, it inevitably engenders skepticism toward the work of ḥadīth scholars, jurists, and exegetes, with accusations that they have fabricated or distorted the religion. This delegitimizing perspective is exemplified in statements attributed to prominent figures within this movement, such as Abu Sa'īd Khan, who asserts: "The bearers of falsehood, knowingly or unknowingly, have established throughout the world what is called 'Sharī'ah' based on ancestral imitation. In reality, most of this 'manufactured Islam' contradicts the Qur'an."⁴⁶ Such assertions systematically undermine the authority of inherited religious practice and portray the juristic tradition as a deviation from the Qur'an. Some adherents go further, claiming, for instance, that "the prayer practiced today is polytheistic because it is based on non-Qur'anic ḥadīths," or that "the ḥadīths were transmitted centuries later and cannot be trusted." This approach produces a profound epistemic rupture between contemporary generations and the Islamic scholarly heritage, fostering a negative perception of scholars as rigid traditionalists rather than as transmitters and interpreters of divine revelation. As confidence in scholarly authority diminishes, youth become increasingly unable to distinguish between academically grounded scholarship and populist rhetoric, leaving the field open to anyone invoking the slogan of "returning to the Qur'an" without adherence to methodological rigor.⁴⁷

6.3 Spreading Theological and Legislative Disorder Among Bengali Youth

The social consequences of these suspicions are particularly pronounced among Bengali youth. Common assertions within this demographic include claims such as: "Religion is a personal spiritual relationship," "Practical rulings are not a condition of faith," and "The proliferation of legal details represents human restrictions rather than divine guidance." Repetitive slogans like "The Qur'an is clear in itself and requires no intermediaries" contribute to theological confusion and legislative laxity. By separating faith from action, denying the binding nature of Sharī'ah rulings, and minimizing the significance of practical worship, religion is redefined as a purely individual spiritual experience rather than a structured system of commitments and obligations. This reinterpretation encourages selective adherence to religious duties, blurs the distinction between lawful and unlawful, and frames religious rulings as social constraints rather than divine directives. Modern social media accelerates the dissemination of such ideas through simplified discourses that blend rationalist slogans with moral appeals, often devoid of scholarly rigor or methodological discipline. A particularly concerning phenomenon is the substitution of established scholarly authority with social media influences. While followers reject adherence to traditional juristic schools under the guise of intellectual freedom, they often exhibit uncritical devotion to charismatic figures. Comments praising proponents such as Sajel Roshan— "You opened our eyes," or "I lost faith in the ḥadīths and found tranquility only through his books"—illustrate that this movement does not eradicate imitation but merely redirects it from structured scholarly methodology to personal charisma. The danger lies not in the outright rejection of religion but in fostering a distorted religiosity detached from practical consequences, separating creed from conduct, and hollowing out the Sharī'ah of its regulatory and social function. This, in turn, poses a significant threat to long-term religious and intellectual stability.⁴⁸

7 Discussion

The contemporary Quranist movement in Bangladesh challenges traditional Islamic authority by promoting exclusive reliance on the Qur'an while marginalizing the Sunnah. This trend, particularly appealing to youth and university students through media and online discourse, reflects both historical reinterpretations and modern

⁴⁶ See: Abu Sa'īd Khan, প্রচলিত ইসলাম ও প্রকৃত ইসলাম (al-Islam al-Sha'i' wa al-Islam al-Haqiqi) (Dhaka: Bangla Bazar, Forum of Divine Revelation and Qur'anic Studies, 1st ed., 2022), p. 32.

⁴⁷ See: Akram Bhuiya Belsaeri, *Hadis Aswikār Kari Ahl-e Qur'an* (Munkiru al-Hadith al-Musammawn bi Ahl al-Qur'an) (Dhaka: Dar Ashraf al-Makhlūqat li al-Nashr, 1st ed., 2025), vol. 1, p. 191.

⁴⁸ See: Akram Bhuiya Belsaeri, *Hadis Aswikār Kari Ahl-e Qur'an* (Munkiru al-Hadith al-Musammawn bi Ahl al-Qur'an) (Dhaka: Dar Ashraf al-Makhlūqat li al-Nashr, 1st ed., 2025), vol. 1, pp. 191-192.

intellectual currents. Critical analysis reveals significant methodological and doctrinal flaws. Quranist claims often involve selective interpretation and disregard the inseparable relationship between revelation and prophetic guidance. The Sunnah is not optional—it provides essential context, explanation, and practical implementation of the Qur'an. Ignoring it leads to incomplete understanding of Islamic law and principles. From the perspective of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, authentic engagement with the Qur'an requires adherence to the Sunnah. Textual and rational analysis confirms that the Qur'an itself mandates this integration, making exclusive Quranist positions theologically unsound. Traditional scholarship remains vital for maintaining doctrinal coherence and methodological rigor. Societally, this movement risks fragmenting religious understanding and community unity. Its appeal among educated youth highlights the need for balanced religious education that fosters critical thinking and preserves the integrity of Islamic epistemology. In summary, rejecting the Sunnah in favor of Qur'an-only interpretations is neither methodologically robust nor sustainable. The Qur'an and Sunnah are inseparable for correct understanding and practice. Strengthening scholarly engagement, education, and informed discourse is essential to counter misconceptions and reinforce authentic Islamic knowledge in Bangladesh.

8 Conclusion

The suspicions surrounding the Sunnah and the binding nature of legislative obligation extend far beyond academic debate. They have profound implications for religious authority, trust in the scholarly tradition, and the theological and practical formation of youth. These effects are the natural consequence of a fragmentary Qur'anist methodology that isolates the text from its historical and practical context, separating divine revelation from its lived implementation. Consequently, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive engagement with these claims in light of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the methodological framework of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. Future research may further explore the sociological dimensions of this movement across South Asia.

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